



WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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MARIO A. ORANGIO

Chief of Department

September 15, 2008

By now, the tragic news of the Saturday morning fatal fire in Lexington that took the life of 48 year old Gena Brown has spread. Ms. Brown, the mother of two young daughters, was trapped in her family home as fire rapidly spread through it. Prior to succumbing, Ms. Brown was able to alert her daughters who crawled to safety through a 2nd story window and alerted neighbors who summoned the fire department. The early morning fire that raced through the family's single family home is believed to have resulted from a build up of lint in the exhaust vent of an electric clothes dryer.

According to the Massachusetts State Fire Marshal, during 2007 in Massachusetts alone, there were 117 clothes dryer fires that caused two civilian injuries, two firefighter injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$641,032. More than 60% occurred in 1 & 2 family homes. National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) statistics for the year 2005 indicate that nationally, there were 14,500 reported non-confined home structure fires involving clothes dryers or washing machines. In these fires, the leading cause was failure to properly clean the appliance. Please take the following steps offered by the NFPA to help prevent these types of fires:

- Never operate a dryer without a lint trap and always clean the filter and remove accumulated lint from around the drum before or after each use.
- Make sure the dryer is plugged into an outlet suitable for its electrical needs; overloaded electrical outlets can result in fire.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave your home, never allow a dryer to operate unattended.
- Keep the dryer area clear of combustibles, i.e. boxes, paper or clothing.
- Dryers should always be installed and serviced by a professional.
- Have gas connections regularly inspected by a professional to ensure gas lines are intact.

Thank you for helping spread the word on fire safety.

Sincerely,

Chief Mario A. Orangio

Fire Prevention Saves Lives